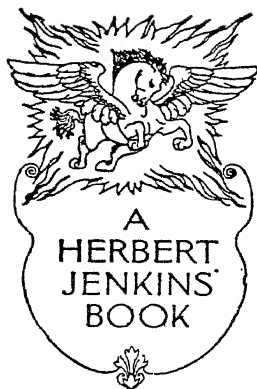


MRS. MAY'S LATEST

Edited by
THOMAS LE BRETON

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO
MY BROTHER
H. ATHOL FORDE
A GOOD FELLOW AND A FINE ACTOR
"ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE"
AND HE HAS ALWAYS PLAYED A MAN'S PART

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MRS. MAY'S LATEST

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

I AIN'T like any orninary lady what makes resylotions and don't keep 'em, Mr. Lee Briton, Mrs. May said to me confidentially. I made mine and I kep' 'em. I'll tell you.

Fust, I said as 'ow I'd never drink more nor six ports in one pub, at a time. I 'aven't. I 'ad six at the "Feathers" and then I left because the chucker out said I weren't to go to sleep in the bar. I wasn't a-going to sleep, but I wanted to think whether I'd 'ad five or six glasses—that's all.

Then I said as I'd stand no more sauce from Feeby Crouch and I didn't. Arter I'd got 'old of 'er 'air she said as she'd never sauce me again and say as I were a woman, what she done. I made 'er agree as I were a lady.

Then I said as I'd tell that barmaid at the "Keys" as she weren't no lady. I done it, though I 'ad to go outside to do it.

Then I said as I'd never pay the tally-man if so be he worruttet me to pay. And I ain't and if 'e summonses me I'll move.

But what I said were me chief resylo-tion were this. I'd been obligin' old Mother Sowberry for near on six months—five bob a day and nothink found. She's the meanest woman in the Parish and 'er old man dassent say a word if she's list'ning, what she gen'rally is.

Three weeks ago she says as she wouldn't require me no more. It made me that mad as I told 'er I resigned me services and off I went.

But next day I thinks as I ought to be forgivin' and so I goes as usual when I see Rosy Pumple washin' out ther shop.

"'Ere," I says sharp, "what you mean by it when you're on ther dole."

She got a grin on 'er ugly face as makes yer think of orgingrinders specially about the grinders what is missin', and she sits up and back answers me like a elephant. "I'm on'y 'ear as Mrs. Sowberry's

friend and I ain't taking no selery."

"You're a liar," I says straight, being honest and open as a lady did ought to be,



"I AINT LIKE ANY ORNINARY LADY."

"for well I know as you're not the sort to be washin' for nothink."

"I'd do anythink to oblige a friend," she says and I told 'er 'er name oughter been Safirer.

"I'm going to tell 'em at your exchange," I says, "as you're in work and don't want no dole. And I'll take yer 'at

to show as it's you," and I 'ad it offen 'er 'ead like a shot.

She begun to yell murder because I s'pose some of 'er silly 'air were sticking to 'er old 'at, and in come Mother Sowberry.

"Whatever is the matter? " she says, and then I speaks up.

"She's on the dole," I says, "and she ain't got no right to work."

"I ain't payin' 'er nothink," the old cat says, "and if I like to give 'er a few things to eat that ain't wages."

Oh! thinks I, that's it. Very artful I thinks—feeds Rosy so as to get outer payin' a honest wage for a honest day's work.

I goes down to the Exchange but though the man there says as it weren't right, 'e didn't think as 'e could interfere unless Rosy were being paid. "She might go to any friend's 'ouse," says 'e, "and get 'er food give 'er, but that don't constitute no offence. If she is in receipt of wages let me know."

But I'd made up me resylotion as I'd get even with both Rosy and old Sowberry and I think as a lady what

breaks a New Year resylotion ain't no Christian.

I borrs a bit o' blue ribbin from Ducky Tupster while she were out. There's a winder broke in Ducky's kitchen at the back so as I can open the winder and go in to see as there's no one been burglin' 'er in 'er absence.

Well, I sewed the ribbin on Rosy's 'at and ironed it into a new shape and then I took it to 'er flat. I see 'er look guilty when I come in but I says cheerful: "I thought you might want yer 'at, old dear, so I done it up nice and it looks better nor new."

She near split 'er ears a grinning, and said I'd made it look beautiful, and she were glad we was friends. Then I started back as if I were struck by lightning. "Rosy," I says alarmin' like, "'Ow bad yer look. You ain't a goin' to die—are yer?"

She were frightened at once, bein' one of them what thinks if 'er big toe aches as she's mortifyin'.

"I don't think I'm reely ill," she says, but she turned as white as one of my sheets—not 'ers.

"You're dreadful ill-lookin'," I says, "I never see no one look worse, not even Dolly Blinks and she died the same night. I must see you in bed at onct," says I, very urgent, "and you must 'ave a sailin' draft," I says.

I got 'er to bed and she were shiverin' and said she felt like dyin', so I says as I'd go for the doctor and get 'er ther med'cine.

I got a med'cine bottle and I putt salt in it and mustard and parafine ile and vinegar and I shook it up well and took it to 'er. She tried to make out she were better and didn't want to take it, but I insisted and when I left 'er I knowed she wouldn't stand up again for the next week.

Now I 'appen to know as old Sowberry were to 'ave a party that night, and I knowed as she'd want 'elp. So round I goes and sees 'er.

"Please 'm," I says most quiet and genteel, "Rosy sends 'er respects and don't expect to live the day out."

"Oh!" she says, "and I've got a lot o' friends comin' to-night. What ever shall I do? I reckoned on 'er help. Don't

you think as she'll live long enough for that? "

" You can go and see 'er yerself," says I dignified. " I s'pose you got the same old lot comin' ? "

" Oh ! yes," she says, " o' course you come and give me an 'elp last year. Don't you think you could this ? "

" Well," I says, " I never bear no ill-will, but I'm worritted by so many ladies wantin' me ter oblige—well," I says thoughtful—" I might come at four, p'raps."

" I'll give you five shillings for the evening," she says eager. " There's ten coming and I've got sich a beautiful supper."

So it were arranged, but the fust thing I done were to call on the people and say : " Mrs. Sowberry sends 'er love, but she arsts them not to come, as 'er fracktotum is a dyin' and she might 'ave to nuss 'er at any moment."

When old Sowberry found no one come and things was spoiling, she sent me round to arst them why. So I come back and says as they was not goin' to be at 'er beck and call, and they wasn't comin'.

“ ‘Orrid people,’ she says, a ‘most cryin’ in ‘er wicked temper. “ I’ll never speak to none of ‘em again. If they come ‘ere send ‘em off, and if you’ll come back on the old terms we’ll let bygones be bygones.”

‘Er and me and ‘er old man eat up the supper and she give me enough to take ‘ome as would do for me for a week.

Some of them people what should ‘a’ come to ‘er supper come to see ‘er but I were always watchin’ and I soon sent ‘em off. As to Rosy—she only come to ther shop onct and then I showed ‘er an ‘andful of ‘air what ‘ad come off with ‘er ‘at and what I ‘ad keepsaked, and she never come again.

But I carried out me resylotion to pay out them thieves, Rosy and old Mother Sowberry. And that’s what I call bein’ a Christian lady what keeps ‘er word.

MY ATTIC

I live close under the chimley pots

But lor' what a view I've got.

Across the trees in the old churchyard,

Across the wash in the next backyard,

Right up to the moon, if I look up 'ard,

A top of a chimley pot.

* * *

I'm 'igh up under the chimley pots,

But my room is 'ard to beat.

The sun don't shine in the street below,

And when it's 'ot, it gets no blow,

But the sun shines in at my room, I know,

And the breeze comes in a treat.

* * *

For the wind comes round by the chimley
pots,

And when me ile is spare,

I sit in the dark for an 'our or so

And watch the stars as they come and
go,

And peep through clouds what grow
and grow

As I look from me winder there.

And I think quite a lot, and I 'ope quite
a lot,

And I sleep right under me chimley pot.

PROFESSIONAL DROWNING

ME and old Sowberry never could agree, me being a lady and 'er so common, and arter some of 'er friends what didn't come to ther party come and made mischief, I left 'er, and somehows no woman as I called on wanted a lady 'elp and times got bad. I don't say as I were down and out, Mr. Lee Briton, because I locked me door and no land-lady could turn me out—not if she got fifty summonses. Likewise I weren't down because I were afeard as she'd come upstairs and come in if I went out, so I 'ad to wait till I see 'er safe outer 'er room.

But it were like this. Perc Olding 'ad been making up to me somethink ferocious; borrored ev'ry penny I 'ad, and then said as 'e'd give me in charge if I follored 'im and annoyanced 'im a-arstin' for money. 'E said as when I could stand 'im a tonic I might speak to 'im, but not before.

I've buried two but 'e were worse nor either, so as I sometimes felt as I could never love 'im no more.

Last week me right eye were a beauty what 'e give me for just a telling of 'im what I thought of 'im while we was in the Seven Bells.

I couldn't go to work for a week and 'ad to say as 'ow I'd got the flu, so it were a fack as I got shocking stoney. I don't say as I were broke on Sat'day night but I'd on'y got tuppence 'apenny in the wide and everybody knows what a scandalous price they charge for even a small port.

But, when Perc called, me being so sweet, I forgive 'im when 'e perdooced some fish and taters, and said as 'ow 'e'd got an appointment at the "Crown," and I could come too if I were nippy.

Perc said as 'ow 'e were a going to meet a friend at the Crown but it turned out it were 'is brother 'Erb—as if 'e couldn't say it were 'is brother instead of calling 'im a friend. I knowed 'Erb, 'aving seen 'im pinched for jumping on a lady friend of mine what 'ad on'y called 'im a thief and a murd'rer for

bringing 'er 'usband 'ome one pay night without a copper in 'is pocket.

'Owever 'e were quite the gent this night, and we 'ad two ports each and 'im as nice as pie, calling me old ducks just as if 'e'd never seen me before.

"What about you and me and Perc 'aving a week end at Southend ter-morrer," 'e says, "I'll pay exes, and you look as if a good blow would do you good."

"She's 'ad it quite recent," says Perc, "'aven't you, Gladys, old dear?" says Perc, the brute, and I knowed then as I'd soonest love 'Erb nor 'im. In fack I did think of chucking Perc; for 'is name were against 'im; but me second were named 'Erb so it sounded 'omely and reminding like of 'appier days.

But I didn't know then what I know now, and if ever there was a whitend stepelker it were both of 'em.

We went off to Southend next morning, 'Erb 'aving took week-end tickets, and they was as nice as pie so as I begun to 'ave me sushpishions, because it ain't

nat'ral for two gents to take a lady out, and never want to fight or nothink. Then 'Erb arst me if I didn't admire an 'ero, and I guessed something nasty were coming.

"Depends," I says. "One 'ero as I knows on went through fire and water to save 'is life. So what sort of an 'ero do you mean?" I arsts.

"I mean the bloke what plunges into the sea and saves the 'eroine's life," 'e says. "Say yours f'r instance."

"Not mine," I says, "because I'd sooner die than go in a boat and be drowned."

"But suppose as it's quite safe and made yer fortune?" 'e says, and then I knowed as they was up to some-think.

Then 'e said 'e'd soonest lose the best thirst a man ever 'ad than lose me, and 'e looked so loving that I begun to think as 'is were true love, though I did ought to know as no gent loves true unless 'e's going to get somethink for it. But we 'ad a nice lunch and 'e would 'ave me 'ave two ports and so I tried to like 'im everso.

But arter we 'ad got away from the reteront, 'Erb begun again. "Suppose you was to make a fi' pun note by just getting yer clothes damp?" 'e says.

I didn't like to be so rude as to say I didn't want no fi' pun note when I did; so I arst 'im to explain.

"Fust of all," 'Erb says, "you got to pertend as Perc is your 'usband and you don't neither of you know me."

"Well," I says, "seeing as Perc wants to marry me I don't see no 'arm in that, if so be you paid me a fiver for it."

"It ain't much more nor that," 'Erb says, "on'y to fall into the water off the pier and let me rescue you. You see I'll pertend as I happen to be passing at the time and in I'll jump before you can get yer 'ead wet. Then Perc will sing out: 'Oh, me wife—me dear wife—save 'er, me 'ero and Evan will reward you.'"

I just stared and 'Erb goes on: "Then when I saves you, Perc will take the 'at round and 'e'll see as everyone will shrub-scribe and you and us will go 'alves. 'Ow's that, 'old ducks?"

I says as I'd think about it, not meaning to 'ave nothink to do with being

drowned. Safety fust is my motter, but 'Erb 'ad got my return ticket and I didn't like to say much till I got 'old of it.

It were just arter Church time and the parade and the pier was crowded, and the women did stare at me with two gents awful affeckshonate—jalous, of course. But when we went on the pier, Perc and me walked arm in arm and 'Erb 'e walked be'ind as if 'e didn't know us.

That ought to 'ave made me superstitious, but some'ow I were on'y thinking what a skinny lot the women was, and 'ow they must be jalous of me 'aving such a fine figger, when Perc says as 'e 'ad somethink funny to show me on the lower deck, where no one went when they 'ad their best clothes on.

"If you bend over," says Perc, "you can see thousands of crabs running about. Ain't they funny?"

Me, never being superstitious, bended over the rail and then I felt 'im catch 'old of me legs and tip me over.

Down I went and I thought over me faults what I might 'ave 'ad, and about

the sins of the rest of us. I didn't see no crabs nor nothink but I struggled up, but this time I were almost full of water so I knowed as I were too 'eavy to swim.

I were in bed when I come alive again, but when they give me some 'ot brandy and water I were able to whisper as the water were already inside me, and I'd 'ave the brandy neat.

Later on, arter I'd 'ad a sleep, they told me as a gent on the pier just over where I'd falled in, jumped in after me and saved me at the risk of drowning 'isself. "Somethink like an 'ero," they says, "and yer 'usband," they says, "'as gone with 'im, and 'e were that grateful as 'e collected pounds for 'im."

When they says as my clothes was dry and I could jine me 'usband, they gave me a bill for eight and six.

"Well," I says, "you'd better fetch me 'usband for I lost me purse in the water."

They seemed to think as I'd know where 'e were, but when they found as 'e 'adn't told me they made inquiries

among the customers, and I 'eard as 'im and the 'ero was staying somewheres in Westcliffe, and one gent said as 'e 'eard me 'usband say as they would 'ave a



" I GOT UP EARLY AND OFF I GOES TO THER PARADE."

swim fust thing in the morning, and then they'd catch the train to London.

I got up very early and off I goes on to ther parade and 'id meself in one of them love boxes where you can sit and on'y loving couples come.

Two hours I waited wondering 'ow I were to get back to London let alone 'Ackney, when at last I see them a coming as large as life laughing and talking with towels over their arms just like two dukes, thinking 'ow they'd bested me, I reckon.

They went down to the water, what I couldn't 'a done then for fear of it coming along and swallering me, but I walked along the cliff till I see them going close under the cliff and soon coming out so as no lady could look at 'em. Then they walked into the sea and started to swim out.

Then I see me chance—feeling like the 'eroine I were, I climbed down the cliff and found their clothes and a suit case—a big 'un. Into the suit case I stuffed most of their clothes, all but their boots in fack, and I then climbs up the cliff again.

But when I were near the top I 'eard me cognomen called out: "Gladys!"—'Erb calls and both come swimming arter me as 'ard as two whales.

Luckily there was a cab coming along and I stopped it and told the cabby to drive along. Then when 'e drove off I looked back and there were those two ruffins, with on'y bathing whatyercallits on, and their boots in their 'ands shouting for me.

But I'm a most remorseful lady, and

I see as they 'ad swindled me, on'y I 'ad a idea. I opened the suit case and felt in their pockets and there was seven pounds seventeen and fivepence and the return tickets. I tore two of them up and kep' me own, and then I put the clothes back in the case and pushed it under the seat.

Then I meant to tell the cabby to turn round and drive to the station when looking back I see a cab coming along at an 'undred miles a hour and 'Erb leaning outer one winder and Perc outer the other.

"Drive round the first turning—quick," I says to my cabby and round one 'e goes. "'Ere," I says, leaning out, "'ere's a bob over, drive like anythink to the pier and when you see a gent with a red tie and brown boots and a wart on 'is nose, name of Jones, tell 'im to get in and come quick to me, and 'e'll give you double fare."

Then out I slips and 'e drives on and in a minute I see the other cab stop at the top of the street and 'Erb shouting: "That's the cab—catch it," and their cabby drives arter it.

I'd gone into a shop and I see their cab drive past, the cabby whipping up 'is 'orse cruel, and when it were out of sight, I went up the street and called another cab and drove to the station.

The train weren't to start for a quarter of a hour, what made me mad, and I told the porter I'd report 'im for keeping it back, but that didn't make 'im do 'is duty. So I went into the ladies' waiting room and watched.

I never knowed the minutes go so slow, and just when I thinks it were safe to get into the train now, in comes my two beauties running and looking into all the carriages. One 'ad a old waterproof over 'is bathers, and the other a old great coat, so I supposed as they'd borrored 'em, for they wouldn't 'ave stole such rubbish.

When they'd gone the length of the train and not finding me as they reckoned on, they went to the booking office to wait for me and I run to a carriage and got in sharp.

But one of 'em must a been watching the train for I 'eard a shout as made me

heart stand still in me mouth and then the train begun to move out.

For the life of me I couldn't 'elp but put me 'ead outer winder to laugh at 'em what were a silly thing to do, for they 'adn't knowed what department I were in and that give me away.

'Erb shouts: "Stop 'er," and Perc calls out "Thieves and murder," and I were afeard as the train would stop. It were going frightful slow too, and 'Erb runs like lightning and jumps on the step of my department and tries to open the door.

There were a old gent in it with a umberella and I sings out: "There's a lunatic coming to murder us all," and 'Erb did look awful with 'is 'air on end, and 'is mack near off, and showing as 'e 'adn't got no shirt on, and the old gent sings out "murder" and digs at 'im 'ard with 'is umberella.

It took two shoves and then I 'elped with my little 'and in 'is 'air, and 'e rolls off and I see the porter coming to pick 'im up.

I wonder who paid that eight and six

—I know I didn't, and I wonder 'ow them two got back to 'Ackney.

I never see 'em for months arter and then I were walking out with a gent as were a prize fighter, so I laughed scornful at 'em.

COMPETITIONS

YOU know Catty Uggins—calls 'erself Catherine— Mr. lee Briton, well if you don't it don't much matter for she ain't no ketch—on'y I know 'er fine. Well, she come to me the other day and says she, "I'm a-goin' in for a cum-petition."

"Oh," I says, "then you can lend us 'alf a dollar?" for many's the time when she's arst me, though I knows 'er too well to be sich a fool as to let 'er owe me money.

"I ain't got enough for that," she says, the mean thing, "but you can come inter ther cumpetition with me."

"Tell us all erbout it," I says, a'most too disgusted to talk to 'er, on'y as she were goin' in the d'rection of the 'Old King's 'Ead,' I thought as I'd go as fur with 'er, knowing as if I arst 'er what she'd 'ave she'd say 'a port' fast enough, and then when it were ordered I could say as

I'd left me money at 'ome. That's the on'y way to deal with a common woman like 'er, what ain't got no ladylike manners like me.

So she told me as you on'y 'ad to write down the names of ten football clubs to get five 'undred pound. Well, that didn't seem difficult and I said I could do it without 'er a-interferin', but some'ow I knew as there was some trick in it, for she takes out a paper and shows me what she called a cowpen.

"You got to put down the names of the ten clubs what win in ten matches," she says.

I 'ad to think a little, but I soon see me way. "All right me gal," I says, thinking as I could get the names outer the Sat'day night paper. My late diseased used to borrar the 'Star' every Sat'day night to see if the Horient 'ad lost agen.

But the artful Biddy 'adn't told me all. It seemed as you was to write down the names of the winning teams before they won, what were ridic'lous. No one couldn't know that and I see as she were trying to get money out of me.

We'd got to the 'Old King's 'Ead' and

she stopped outside till I arst 'er what she were goin' to 'ave. She come in quick enough then, and when the bar lady looks at us, I says: "This lady wants two large ports," I says quick, and when the gal brought 'em, I says to Catty: "I meant to treat yer," I says, "but since you are so mean you can pay."

It seems she was knowed there, and didn't like to make argyments, and she forked out. That's where a lady what 'as got brains and plenty of 'em scores over one of them common women.

"You'll 'ave to make up for it by payin' for the paper," she says, "and the stamp," she says, "and that's little enough, for there ain't no hentry fee."

Of course I said I would; but I didn't see why I should do 'er dirty work all the same. Then I 'ad a think—and I'm a wonnerful lady when it comes to thinking. I knowed as I could do with the money, for times is 'ard and though I'm a tee-totaller now, and never drink nothink but port, the price of a glass is wicked. Summun did ought to be 'ung for it and I won't say who it is, but if I was to see old Churchill arsting for a drop o' water

I'd give it 'im knowing as that weren't what 'e meant. Everyone knows as water were on'y give us for washin' in, but many's the time as I've drunk it of late, and ev'ry time it's made me shudder.

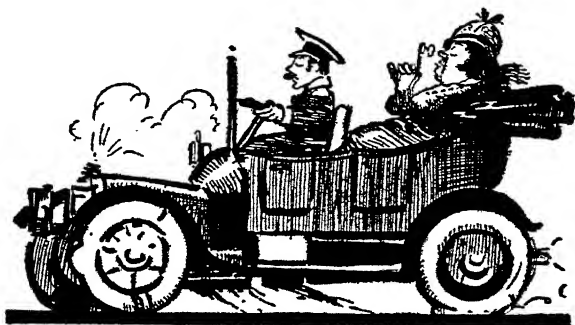
I 'adn't been thinking long when I see me chance. Most ladies what as been married 'as 'ad experience o' betting. Many a time I watched to see what my 'Erbert 'ad won, cause if 'e 'adn't won I'd give 'im what for for wasting of my money, but if 'e 'ad I 'ad to make 'im give over 'alf.

Mind you some ladies ain't like me, and arst for the lot, but that ain't the way to get any more, and beside you never know then if 'e ain't told you the wrong 'orse what 'e put 'is money on.

Knowing all about betting as I did, I knowed as the gents what give the tips in the papers what show you what you 'ad better not bet on, always put two 'orses together—like "Black cat" or "Daisy Root" to win. That gives 'em two chances of being able to print nex' day the news "I done it—I'm the bloke what tipped 'Jane Eyre' at 140 to 1." No one looks to see that what 'e guv were "Black

Cat" or "Daisy Root", and if they did 'e'd on'y say as it were a mistake of the printer. I know 'em. Still it give me what my 'Erb used to say were a glue.

It were a brain wave, but I see a fortin'



"I SEE A FORTIN' IN IT AND ME ROLLIN' IN MONEY AND ME OWN MORTAR CAR."

in it and me rollin' in money and me own mortar car.

"Look ere," I says to Catty, "'ave you ever won?"

"No," she says, "but someone's got to win—so why not me?"

"It won't be you in donkey's years," I says, "for you don't know nothink, and you never will. But," says I, "if you give me five bob I'll guarantee to give all the ten winners. 'Ow's that?" I says.

"You never," she says, and then she arst me 'ow I knowed.

I says as 'ow Clara Voyance done it, and she arst me 'ow that were, so I explains: "You got to hiplotise yourself," I says, "then it all comes to you. Some gets it a-looking inter a crystal but I find as any sorter glass will do. I were looking ~~inter~~ me glass o' port and I see the names quite distinct and what to do. On'y," I says, "I weren't quite sure of the last two clubs. If I'd the price of another on me I'd get that right."

They say as an 'int's as good as a wink to a dead donkey, and so it were. We 'ad another glass and she paid for it. Then she arst me for the names but I told 'er "no" until she give me five bob.

When she see as she weren't able to rob me, she and me went 'ome to 'er flat, what's a bed sittin' room like mine, and she bought a copy of the paper on the way.

I didn't tell 'er me plan till she 'ad paid over, and when I did she wanted 'er money back. "No," I says, "when you go to the 'Old King's 'Ead' and get back the money as you paid the gal to-night you can 'ave mine, but not before,

me woman. You've bought a article and I don't take it back."

'Owsomever I did tell 'er that when she give a double tip she must 'ave give the winner, seeing they was on'y one of two and then if the paper didn't pay up she could summons it in the p'lice Court and it 'ud pay up quick enough there. She weren't so blind as she didn't see that, so we filled in the cowpen, like this—"Spurs or M. United"—"Hammers or Newcastle"—"Liverpool or Halifax", and so on.

I were sorry as I give 'er the idea so cheap when we'd finished, for the cowpen looked fine.

I didn't see 'er for a week later and then she were grinning all over 'er ugly face. "Well," I says, "did you get the five 'undred pound?"

"No," she says, "but I got a fiver from the editor for the funniest story of the week. 'E sent a young gent to interview me what said as the old gent laughed that much as 'e 'ad to 'ave five buttons sowed on 'is westcoat. So I'm satisfied."

"Then where's my 'alf?" I arsts strick, and she 'ad the sauce to say as she 'adn't

promised me nothink, on'y if she got the five 'undred pound.

But when she said as she were real sorry, I give 'er back what 'air were sticking to me fingers, what shows as I'm a forgivin' lady, and I 'ad two ports with her, and two pound four, what was all she'd got left. But there I always were a lady, Mr. lee Briton, as well you know.

THE OLD KING'S 'EAD

When I 'ave a port with a lady friend
And she 'as a port with me,
(Oh, they've got th' 'lectric light in the
Old King's 'ead)
It's wonnerful 'ow bright the 'ole world
seems
And you won't find it so on tee."

* * *

When me lady friend turns to me and says:
Old Ducks 'ave another with me,
(Oh, it's cozy and it's warm in the Old
King's 'ead)
I says "there's no ports in the pickshers
dear,"
But the Pickshers I like I can see in 'ere.

* * *

Then I looks at me lady friend and says:
"You must 'ave a last with me,
(Oh, ev'rybody's jolly in the Old King's
'ead)
I thinks 'ow 'evan must be like our bar
And that's where I'd like for to be.

THOUGHTS LIGHTLY TURN

IT come erbout like this, Mr. lee Briton and I ain't telling you no lies—I ~~were~~ erbligin' a Mrs. Oldin' 'cause she couldn't get no servants to stay with 'er and I were silly enough to feel sorry for 'er and cleaned up 'er old 'ouse.

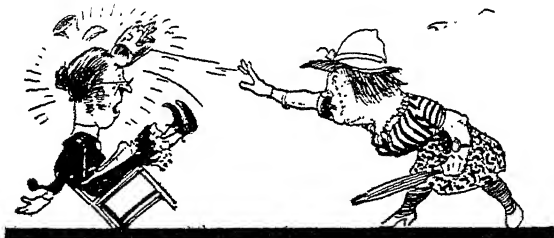
But she's that sneaky as you can't trust 'er no'ow. She told me as she were goin' out for ther afternoon, and me, bein' of a trustin' nature, I believed 'er.

I were scrubbin' out 'er bedroom when I wondered 'ow I'd look in 'er Sunday clothes. So I put 'em on, 'at and all, and I must say as I pay fer dressin'. I did look nice and were jist seein' meself in ther glass when in come old Oldin' in a reg'lar tear.

“'Ow dare you?” she shrieks, “messin' up my best things—and me 'at is ruined with yer dirty 'ands.” Then she says more what I'd be ashamed ter repeat.

"Well," I says, when I could get a word in sedgeways, "I thought you'd left these for the old clothes woman—and I were seein' if I'd give ten bob fer the lot; but they ain't worth it," I says.

Then she fair lost 'er 'ead, and so I told 'er as she could do 'er own dirty



"SO I TOLD 'ER AS SHE COULD DO 'ER OWN DIRTY WORK."

work and I made 'er pay up and left 'er.

But if you'll believe I felt shockin' lonely. When a lady knows trouble and she's got an 'usband, she can tell 'im what she thinks of 'im and it relieves 'er feelin's. But there was me with ther most lovingest 'eart as never was, with no 'usband and no one ter love me.

So I see clear as I oughter get married agen and that I'd better find ther lucky man without more loss o' time. So I went inter ther Park, where most men

what is in love go, and I see some trousers sittin' on a seat with a newspaper in front of 'is face, so as I couldn't see whether I'd like 'im or not.

So I went closer but 'e kep' the newspaper so as to purvent me lookin', which I thought were very supercicious. I says to meself: "'E's afeard of fallin' in love with me if 'e sees me, so 'e's 'idin'.

So I walks be'ind ther seat, but if 'e didn't turn so as to keep ther paper betwixt us may I never tell ther truth agen. I walked right round 'im three times, but 'e kep' shiftin' so as ther paper were always betwixt us.

"Never mind," I says to meself, "I'm a lady what ain't a goin' ter give in," and so I took a box o' matches outer me pocket, what I'd borrered from old Oldin', and I sets light to the paper.

You should 'a 'eard 'im screech when the flame sudden shot up. 'E dropped the paper like an 'ot tater, and run off shriekin' fer ther keepers. Then when I see 'is face, I see as I could never love 'im thorer, and so I went on and left 'im tellin' a keeper some lie or other.

It were a nice sunny day and severial

gents were lying on ther grass and one I quite took a fancy to. 'E were asleep and I see as 'e 'ad nice teeth and that's always a blessin' on ther poor wife what can't eat crusts 'erself—nor gristle.

So down I sits beside 'im and strokes 'is 'air what gents gen'rally likes. 'E opens 'is eyes and I see as they was blue and I dote on blue eyes—so many gents 'aving black uns. Then up 'e jumps and 'e must 'a' been dreamin' night mares, for 'e stared at me like someun frightened, and sits up.

“What's yer name ? ” I says, “mine's Gladys Alicia May.”

Instead of answerin' 'e tried to get up, on'y I 'ad 'old of 'is arm. “Ain't love loverly ? ” I says, shy like. “On'y you mustn't kiss me in ther Park. Shall we go fer a walk ? ”

“Leggo,” 'e says and tries to get off, so as I see 'e were still nightmarish.

“I got a nice 'ome,” I says, “bein' a widder lady what 'as a lovin' 'eart and 'as buried two 'usbands, what were sorry to leave 'er. Where shall we go ? ”

“I'm engaged,” 'e says, but I guessed that were a lie, and if it weren't I knew

as the gal would never make 'im 'appy, bein' unexperienced.

"But not to ther right 'un," I says playful. "You 'adn't met 'er till you see me, what is so used ter gents that I can't 'elp makin' 'em 'appy."

"I don't want ter be 'appy," 'e says, but I knowed that weren't true—"I'm drawin' ther dole."

"Now 'ain't that nice," I says, "because when we're married we'll both draw it, and be as comf'table as a cat in a cream jug."

"I ain' never goin' ter get married," 'e says, "so you're wastin' yer time with me. Leggo," and ther brute twisted 'isself away.

"All right me man," thinks I, "wait till we're married. You'll pay for this then," and as 'e went off, I ups and follers 'im.

'E begun to run, but I caught 'im just by ther bathin' lake what were empty, it bein' after bathin' hours. But 'e didn't know as there were a barrier there, and so 'e found 'e couldn't get no further and I says to 'im: "I'll foller yer to ther end of ther world, and that's true

love what you've never knowed before, I bet."

Then it struck me, as no one were lookin', as if I put me arms round 'is neck 'e'd believe me. I know as gents is more bashful than any lady, but once you make 'em see as you love 'em, they love you. Gents is always afeard of arstin' fer love and bein' refused, but if they see as they won't be refused, it's all right.

But no sooner did I put out me arms than 'e stepped back and inter ther water 'e fell. "Oh! don't drown yerself for my sake!" I says, "for I can make you 'appy. Come out," I says.

But you'll 'ardly believe me when I tell as 'e never moved, but were sittin' down in two feet of water.

Then up come a Keeper. "Come outer that," 'e says sharp, "you're bathin' arter hours."

"Send 'er away fust," 'e says, but I said as I didn't mind waitin' ter see 'im safe, as 'e'd got 'is clothes on.

The Keeper told 'im ter come out severial times, and then tried ter pull 'im out. But the silly man wouldn't

come and ther Keeper fell in arter 'im what made 'im mad. 'E owked ther chap outer ther water an' said as 'e were a goin' to run 'im in.

Then as they was goin' off I whispered to my chap: "You love me and I'll get yer free."

'E says "Get me loose then," and I flinged ~~me~~ arms round ther Keeper so as 'e 'ad ter let my chap go, what run off at once. 'E were that cold as 'e could run faster nor me, but I kep' arter 'im till I run agen a cop what wanted ter know what I were arter.

Then before I 'ad time ter explain my chap, thinkin' I were comin' arter 'im never looked back, but run on and by ther time the slop 'ad took me address, the poor silly chap were outer sight.

I reckon as 'e's looking every wheres for me, Mr. lee Briton, don't you think so?

And knowing Mrs. May, I said "Yes."

“ SAUSAGES FREE ”

NOW there ain't nothink nicer than a sarsidge for breakfast, unless it's at supper time. When I think of a sarsidge a most bustin' itself with fat and a fizzlin' and a splutterin', I could eat pounds of 'em, couldn't you, Mr. lee Briton? Now, honest, don't it make yer mouth water. It do mine, so as I can 'ardly work I'm so thirsty.

Now you'd think as a lady of my distinction what is knowed in the 'ighest sassiety would be treated with respect by a common butcher. But you jest listen.

There's a new butcher come into our neighbour'ood what 'is name is Oppen—and 'e fancies 'isself a lot more nor any-one fancies 'im, and sich a liar. 'E advertises as 'ow 'e kills 'isself, and when I told 'im 'e'd better do so at once, said as 'e on'y killed for food.

I were nice to 'im at fust—bought 'alf

a pound of 'is sarsidges at a time and passed the time of day most pleasant.

"It's close weather," I says one day, "and these 'ere sarsidges won't keep another hour, so I ought to 'ave 'em 'alf price."

Well, that weren't saying as they was bad, but 'e snapped me up like a 'yena. "Take 'em or leave 'em," 'e says as nasty as nothink. "I've got plenty as likes 'em if you don't."

"Well," says I, "some folks is funny and like their sarsidges 'igh, but I ain't one of 'em," and I were goin' out of 'is old shop when 'e calls out afore a 'ole shopful: "'Ere, you ain't paid."

As it happened, I'd come out without me purse, because there's so many pick-pockets about what marks ladies like me, so I said:

"You can put it down to me account," I says, and left the shop. Then, you may believe me or not, but if 'e didn't come runnin' arter me and snatched 'is dirty old sarsidges outer me 'and may I never say another word.

"I don't make sarsidges for women

"'Ere," I says, as ladylike as ever and never fetching 'im one as 'e deserved, for fear of annoyin' a cop as were watchin', and I 'appen'd ter know as 'im and ther



"I 'APPEN'D TER KNOW AS 'IM AND THER COP WAS PALS."

cop was pals. "'Ere," says I, "d'you know as you're abusin' me vi'lent and that I don't allow even me friends to call me 'woman'—like that."

"'Op it," 'e says, "and don't come to my shop no more, for I won't serve you," and back 'e goes with my 'alf pound of sarsidges.

Off I went, but thinks I: "I'll make you arst me into your old shop me man, before the week's out and you'll arst me to except of pounds of your old sarsidges for nothink."

bread in drippin' and make believe as it were sarsidges, but I felt that mad as I could a killed that there Oppper. So I starts thinkin' 'ow I'd get even with 'im. I lay awake for hours a thinkin', but at last I got the idea and I 'ad to laugh over it.

So nex' mornin' I goes down to see 'Arry Shufflebee, what goes to market for 'is green grocery ev'ry mornin' drivin' 'is own pony. But it got so thin that the cops said it would 'ave to be destroyed unless it 'ad a month's rest and were fed up. 'Arry said it were thin from overfeedin' what brought on innergestion, but 'e 'ad to keep it at 'ome doin' nothink for all that.

So I called at 'is shop. "'Arry," I says, "you ain't took Ramases out for exercise; 'e'll never get well till you do, and the cops will be lookin' for a excuse to 'ave 'im killed."

"What time 'ave I got to take 'im out?" says 'Arry sharp.

"I'll exercise 'im for you," I says friendly like.

pleased as nothink. “ You do that, old dear, and you’ll be welcome to a couple o’ pounds of taters.”

’Alf an hour later be’old Gladys Alicia May walking Ramases down the street where Oppper ’as ’is shop. I’d got Pearl’s old dog on a lead, too, ’er wantin’ it exercised as well, and we stopped opposite Oppper’s.

I see ’im look at me proper, but I never took no notice, but waited there, Ramases not wantin’ to move on.

I see people lookin’ funny at the ’orse and the old dog and then at old Oppper’s sarsidges, and several instead of buyin’ went away.

Oppper see that too, for soon out ’e comes snarly like—“ ’Ere,” ’e says, “ Take them bags o’ bones away from my door.”

“ I’m so sorry, Mr. Oppper,” I says, “ as I couldn’t come arter dark, but the old ’orse wouldn’t walk fast enough. Shall I take ’im into the slaughter ’ouse ? ”

“ What d’yer mean, you ’ag ? ” ’e shouts and that brings up more people.

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“ What d’yer mean, you ’ag ? ” ’e shouts and that brings up more people.

“ Why,” I says, “ you never told me as you’ve stopped killin’ yourself, and I

'urried a-thinkin' as you might 'a' run out 'o sarsidge meat."

"P'lice," 'e shouts, but there weren't a cop near, thank 'evans, and I says, pattin' Ramases: "There's more meat on 'im than you'd think, Mr. Oppper."

Then someun in the crowd sings out:

"Oppper's sarsidges is all meat," what were the notice as 'e'd got in 'is win-der, and then a woman sung out: "Pitch the pison stuff in the gutter," and before you could say "knife," they was in the shop and draggin' down strings of sarsidges and treadin' on 'em.

When the cop come 'e were too busy pushin' the crowd away to mind me, so I sung out to old Oppper: "I'll come arter dark," I says, and off I goes. 'Arry give me the taters and all as I wanted were sarsidges to go with 'em, so I goes to Oppper's and stands lookin' in at 'is win-der, when out 'e comes.

"That were a dirty trick you played on me, Mrs. May," 'e says a'most cryin'.

"That were a nasty name you called me," says I.

“ I take it back,” ’e says, ’umble.
 “ Now come in and let folks see you a
 buyin’ me sarsidges. There won’t be no
 money pass betwixt us up to two pound,
 and if you come and stay in the shop for
 ten minutes a Sat’day nights you’ll always
 be welcome to a pound of the best, if so
 be you tell folks that you were on’y
 ’aving a lark with me.”

“ All right,” I says, “ let’s kiss and be
 friends,” but ’e said ’e’d give me another
 pound instead of the kiss, and so we
 got on all right.

And I will say this, as there ain’t no
 better sarsidges in ’Ackney than Oppers.

TEA LEAVES

What can yer buy with tuppence down
'ere ?

For Sunday's dinner and tea, old dear,
A pennorth o' bread and a pennorth o
cheese

And fill up yer cup with ther best o' teas,
For you 'ave to be thankful for what you
got

And the old tea leaves is still in ther pot.

* * *

You ain't got no shoog and you ain't got
no cream ;

Th' Marg plate's empty and butter's a
dream

And meat's too 'igh and yer coals too low,
But there's always yer bed when you
want ter go,

So it might be wuss, for there—Goo' Lor'
You've used yer tea leaves but twice afore.

* * *

What can yer buy with nothink down 'ere?
A bite outer love with another old dear ;
She lives in our 'ouse as poor as a mouse
But she gives yer the arf of an 'erring in
 souse,
You takes 'er yer tea-pot and there you
 score,
Yer tea leaves was used on'y twice afore.

THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

IT were ther Crismus before last, Mr. lee Briton, my charlady confided in me one day as I was paying her, when Mrs. Croker says to me: "Mrs. May," she says, "could you mind our house for the 'olids as me and my 'usband is a-goin' to spend Crismus in the country." I says: "No," I says, "certingly not. I got friends comin' for Crismus and I've saved up fer the miseltoe a'ready."

"But you could have a couple of friends 'ere," she says, "so long as they wasn't men, and it would save you dinner, for we'll pervide that and give you ten shillings in the bargain."

There it were—me bein' of a sweet dish-poshishion and always obliging I give way for a pound and a goose for dinner, and off went the old geezer and 'im.

To speak the truth what I always do when I can, I 'adn't invited no one, me bein' in sich request as I were sure I'd be

arsted out, besides there bein' on'y one cheer in my flat and the bed not bein' strong enough for two persons to sit on the edge.

But I see a chance now of reely enjoyin' me little self, and so that night I went to the "Blue Cow" where a number of me pals meet and drink, as the sayin' is, and I told 'em as I'd 'ired an 'ouse for Crismus a purpose to 'ave a party, our flats bein' that small as no one can't reely enjoy theirselves.

"Look 'ere," I says to Doll Oddway and Ducky Tupster, "if you was to stop at 'ome it 'ud cost you pounds, and nothin' to show for it except empty bottles and no Crismus comp'ny. Now," I says, "if you ladies find a gent as will pay ten bob for 'isself and one of you, I'll pervide the dinner with port for them as is teetotallers and beer for the rest. Gooses 'd limb and plum puddin's 'ad from Lyons. 'Ow's that?"

Well the idea caught on, and I collected nine pound ten what meant as nigh on twenty people was comin' to me Crismus dinner. Nothink could 'a been more sucessfuller. I put three pound by

for a rainy day, me bein' a careful lady, and I bought two dozen of ports and a pound's worth of Crismus puddins. Then I bought two legs of mutton and on Crismus Eve when the auctions was goin' on, to get rid of what weren't sold at the shops, I bought three geoses for ten bob. The rest of the money was for veges and beer, etcetra.

I 'ad to get up early Crismus mornin' and Ducky come to 'elp me. We 'ad a large gas oven and the fire too in the kitchen, and there was plenty of room for cookin'.

Then Reeny Legg, what 'ad been a waiter in 'er time, come and laid the table beautiful. Old Croker 'adn't locked up nothink, knowin' as I were to be trusted, and Reeny put two tumblers and four wine glasses for every one and plenty of spoons and forks. We found the best tablecloth so as I never see such a lovelly sight as we made.

Dinner were at 'alf past two so as to give time for the pubs to close and then me gusts begun to come in. They was all flappergusted at the sight, for it were better than any resterront and some of

'em was so upset as I 'ad to open six of the ports to start with.

It were a tight fit sittin' down, but we managed it, and me and Ducky dished up everythink at once so as not to lose nothink 'ourselves. The table were reel crowded and I reckoned as 'ow Lord Gorge wasn't doin' no better though 'e calls 'isself liberal. I reckon as I were more liberal.

There was a bit of miseltoe on each plate so as they should all be busy while they was waitin', and except as Brick Low and 'Arry 'All knocked off their glasses and a few others, whilst they was fighting because 'Arry would kiss Brick's missus, we got on loverly.

"Now gents," I says when we put the lot on the table where we could find room, "you got to carve for the ladies, unless the ladies like to 'elp theirselves."

We 'ad gallons of beer for them as wasn't teetollers on'y some were wasted because Nick Perks upset an 'ole can over the cloth. There were a bit of a row about that, because some run into Min Ork's lap what 'ad a new frock on, and serve 'er right for trying to show off.

She throwed a plate at Nick and his missus throwed one back and 'it Gladys Snooks by mistake, what showed 'er up for wearin' the same name as me.

Still we was all soshable and there wasn't nothink left but bones and more of the port, but that were soon finished and the gents pushed the table in the corner so as to play kiss in the ring under the miseltoe.



"'ARRY GOT UP A NEW DANCE WITH ME AS FAIRY LOVERLY."

There was quite a crowd outside, but we didn't care; it bein' Crismus why didn't they go 'ome and 'ave games of their own?

It would a made a cat laugh to see Bricky trying to catch Ducky because 'e saw two Ducky's and went for the wrong 'un. 'Arry got up a new dance with me as fairy Loverly what 'e 'ad

seen at 'is club, but Gladys said it were more football nor dancing, when 'e bumped into everyone else until the kitchen ceilin' come down and I 'ad to stop it. So Brickly made a dart out of firewood and paper and a darnin' needle, and bet other gents as 'e could beat 'em a throwing at a picture of old Croker what 'ung over the chimley piece.

'E were a champing at darts and throwed severial times right in the old gent's eyes. Then Dan Oliver said if 'e weren't a champing at darts 'e could throw a bomb better nor anyone. But as 'e 'adn't no bomb 'e got a tater and throwed it right through a glass cabinet what were full of china. I told 'im not to, but 'e did it twice and there weren't much china left though cups and things ain't dear at Woolfridges.

Some of 'em went upstairs to sleep, but I told 'em as they ought to take their boots off, it bein' a muddy day, before they laid down on the satin quilts, and what more could I say. Any'ow I didn't do it.

Then Ditcher Ogg got a bit of fun up. 'E got a lamp and turned up the wick

so as the soot went all over the place. But 'e got a lot on a cloth and upstairs 'e goes and rubs some on all them as was sleepin'. Of course some come off on the beds but that weren't my doin'.

We was all very comf'table until Sid Lamb got throwing bottles at the other pictures. They was empty bottles, so it didn't matter much, until 'e 'it Sam Body on the 'ead. Even then it wouldn't 'a' mattered if the gents as was downstairs 'adn't took sides. I got under the table but the floor were covered with broke glass and some fool let the Slops in, when they knocked. They took all the gents as was downstairs to the station and one stayed in the 'ouse and another bein' extry nosy 'phoned for old Croker.

Then, if you believe me, 'anged if the Crokers didn't come 'ome and go on at me, somethink chronic. As if I done the damage. So I told 'em straight that if I weren't a forgivin' lady I'd go for deformation of character.

And what's more they arst all the rest of my comp'ny to leave their 'ouse, just as though it weren't Crismus, what's the

time for bein' jolly—But them sort don't understan' bein' Crisians.

They 'ad some bother in gettin' 'Arry out, what 'ad been sleepin' and were extry 'appy. 'E offered to bet old Croker as 'e could dance the 'ornpipe on the dinner table and done it without 'ardly breaking a plate until a interferin' Slop come and tried to pull 'im off, what made 'Arry get 'old of the cloth, so down come everythink on the table in an 'eap on the floor.

It weren't nobody's fault but the interferin' Slop, but be 'anged if me and 'Arry weren't blamed for that. So I said I refused to oblige no longer, and off I goes, and I told the crowd what were waitin' outside as the people of the 'ouse 'ad come 'ome drunk and dishorderly.

But it were a jolly party and I were three quid in pocket, so I know as I done my duty.

“ LOVE BUREAU ”

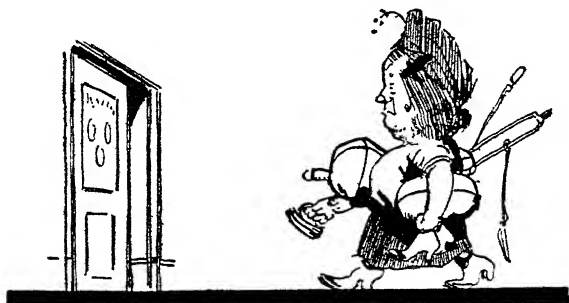
“ MR. LEE BRITON,” sighed Mrs. May, one morning, as she accepted her wage plus two shillings for soap and a shilling for mending the handle of the pail, “ I never see sich 'ard times as these. In my opinion it's because all the money's bein' spent on mortar cars and gadding about, so as women don't care what the 'omes look like.”

And when a woman arsts you to erblige, you may be sure as she wants a lady to do a week's work in a day and no time for meals, what is mortal bad for the innergestion.

I were a erbligin' a Mrs. Ungerford and I'd nearly done 'er ole bedroom when I found as it were eleven o'clock what were time for lunch. Bein' a'most wore out with scrubbin' I must 'ave falled asleep when down comes the woman into the kitchen, what weren't 'er place, and starts grumblin' till I couldn't stand no more.

“ Well,” I says, “ if that’s all the thanks I gets for workin’ me fingers to the bone, pay me me money, and I’m off.”

“ You’ll ’ardly believe it, not knowin’ same as me the meanness of the creature, but she wanted to do me outer five bob, sayin’ I’d more nor taken it out in lunch.



“ I NEVER SEE SICH ’ARD TIMES AS THESE.”

“ Well,” I says, ’aughty like, “ If you ’aven’t got the money say so and I’ll go next door and arst them to lend it yer.” That settled ’er because ’er and the next door ’ate one another. So I got me money but I made up me mind as a clever lady like me oughter do somethink better than slave for a mortar-car woman.

It ’appened as our ground floor front were vacant, owin’ to the gent owin’ to

the landlord seven weeks rent, what 'e couldn't afford to pay with beer the price it is. So I told the landlord as I'd let it for 'im if so be 'e'd let me 'ave it till it were let at two bob a week. Them upstairs wouldn't believe it, but 'e did. Of course it's because o' me bein' such a lady.

Next think I done were to borror some white paint from Alf Capes and on the winders I painted: "LOVE BURO." It looked fine and ev'ry gal passin' stopped and 'ad a look at it. Then I paid for a advert in a 'ackney paper—"Love buro—Lovers troubles cured—small feas—92, Paradise Place, 'Ackney."

I 'ad a lot of gals as paid a bob each and I were doin' well—married women what mostly wanted to get better 'usbands, I charged two bob, knowin' as they was fools, for there ain't no better 'usbands. Then ole Crow, the Landlord, come and made a fuss about me doin' so well. Jalous of course. 'E give me a week's notice so I see as I'd 'ave to give up and then I see a opportunity.

Ev'ry lady knows it's better to 'ave an 'usband to work for 'er than to slave 'er-

self to death on 'er own. I'm a twicer widder lady, so I oughter know.

Well, there come to me a woman as called 'erself, “ Madam Anastasia Bones ” on 'er swanky card, and in the corner “ Robes ” which I knew meant dress-maker in French.

“ What's the trouble ? ” I arst 'er slympathetic. I supposed as 'er 'usband spent money on 'isself, what no lady should allow.

“ I were engaged to get married,” she says and rubs 'er silly eyes.

“ Oh, Lor' ! ” I says, for she looked forty and that skinny as made me feel ill. No stock size about 'er.

“ What do you mean by ‘ Oh lor ’ ? ” she says sharp as vinegar.

“ Why,” I says nice as nuts, “ seein' what a very good lookin' lady you are I should 'a' thought as you'd a been married twenty times by now.”

She 'ad to look pleasant at that, and grin. “ I could 'a' easy been that,” the wicked liar says, “ but I waited till I'd made a bit o' money and a good business. But I were engaged to a perfessional gent as insures people. We could 'a'

been very comf'table till I found 'im out."

"Flirtin'?" I says knowin' them sort what calls from sweet to sweet, as it were.

"No," she says, "onions," she says, and begins to cry.

Then she tole me as she couldn't abear the smell of onions and 'e wanted 'em twice a day at least, so she broke it off, but now she wanted 'im so as she felt misserble and could I get 'im to give up onions.

"Well," I says solemn, "I might," and, thinks I, if I don't, I might get 'im to give 'er up. I like onions meself and I knowed as I were a lot more attractional than 'er.

'Owsomever it ended by my callin' on the gent, what 'is name were Mr. Oliver Percival what sounded nice. I fancied meself bein' called Mrs. Percival so as folks might take me for the Duchess of Northumberland.

"It's so ridic'lous," 'e says, "what's onions meant for but to eat?"

"I love 'em," I says, "and I can make onion dumplings as'll make you forget you ain't a millionaire"

I see 'is mouth fair waterin' and when I arst 'im to 'ave supper at the Buro to talk things over 'e jumped at the chanst.

Them dumplings smelt like 'Evan and as soon as 'e come in I see as 'e loved me. 'E'd got a sweet case with 'im and said 'e'd brought somethink choice for me; but when 'e opened it—there——

I run to the winder and throwed it open. Then 'e laughed. “ Don't you like the odour of Gorgonsoldier ? ” 'e says.

“ 'Ow long as 'e been dead ? ” I says, with me 'ead outer winder.

“ It's a cheese—,” 'e says—“ quite the cheese,” and 'e brings it up to the winder. “ It's lovely and ripe,” 'e says, “ It's the on'y cheese I eat and Anastasia is fond of it too.”

I snatched it out of 'is 'and and put it on the winder sill and shut the winder, but me mind were made up as I wouldn't marry a man as brought a Gorgonsoldier inter my 'ouse.

Even then I thought as the Sanitary Inspector ought to come and remove it and I made Oliver sit that end of the room. 'E were very sulky at first but the dumplings brought 'im to 'is senses.

"Now," I says, "Anastasia is welcome to you, but she won't agree to nothink without me. She's got a fine bit of money so if I bring it off what will you give me?"

In the end 'e give me a letter sayin' 'e'd give me a fiver, but arter 'e'd gone I couldn't fancy that room for days. But Anastasia come to know what I'd done and were most anxious, arter me sayin' a few words about Oliver likin' my dump-lings so much as I could 'ave 'im for the arstin'. "Not as I'd steal another gal's chap," I says, "but if you're not goin' to 'ave 'im—well——"

In the end she promised me a tenner what showed who wanted the other most. "On'y," she says, "No onions."

But there bein' fifteen pound at steak and onions, I thought out a way, me bein' that clever as I oughter be in parleyment.

I knowed I'd seen a paper with a article "ONIONS FOR THE COMPLEXION" and I found it arter I'd mentioned 'ow spotty 'er face were.

She read it and I see it took, so I give 'er a dumpling and though she made

out she couldn' abear it she 'ad a second 'elpin'—

I told 'er it were a required 'taste, but she'd soon like onions as much as Oliver and I arst them both to supper two days later.

I don't believe as she really 'adn't liked onions, but that she wanted to start bossin' 'im, any'ow I got me fifteen pound, so I don't care, and now they've found as matteromonal onion means strong love.

CHARING

As I were a-washing, and a-washing and
a-washing

With me 'ands all a pucker with 'ot water
and the suds,

A thought came in me 'ead

That so be I were dead

I shouldn't be a-washing and a-washing
and a-washing.

* * *

As I were a scrubbing and a-rubbing and
a-scrubbing,

With knives a-sticking through me
shoulders and me back,

I thinks was I in 'Evan

And ther clock were striking seven

I shouldn't bolt me grub in to go rubbing
and a-scrubbing.

* * *

As I were a-sweeping and a-sweeping and
a-sweeping

With me throat as full o' dust as our old
dust cart

I thinks that in the sky

No lady can't be dry

And she never need be sweeping and a-
sweeping and a-sweeping.

and newspapers. And Joan 'ad come up for an 'oliday, when I see 'er a cryin'.

"Oh, Mrs. May," she says to me, "aunt Martha 'as sent me 'ere to stay with aunt Ellen till I agree to marry a gent as she's gone on because 'e's such a gent, and she says as my 'Arry ain't no class and she won't 'ave 'im in our family."

"You needn't worrit over that," I says. "Modarn gals don't marry to please their relations. They marry to please themselves."

"Yes," says Joan, chokin' some more. "But aunt Martha went and see 'Arry's father and told 'im 'is son were no class and she wouldn't 'ave me marry 'im, and that put the old gent out, so as 'e said 'e'd take care 'is boy didn't marry the niece of a insultin' old fieldmale."

"But your 'Arry ain't their 'Arry," I says, "tell 'im to marry you and show 'em as 'e ain't no slave."

"But 'e can't do it, Mrs. May," says Joan, "seein' as 'e 'elps 'is father on the farm and 'is father would turn 'im off if 'e married me and 'e mightn't get no work elsewhere."

"What sorter bloke is the gent as your aunt wants you to marry?" I arsts.

"Quite the gent," she says, "and aunt says as I oughter be proud as sich a gent wants to marry me. 'E's a clerk and wears a 'igh 'at and trowsers like the advertisements, what you see in the paper. Oh! 'e looks a reg'lar nib," she says, "on'y me and 'Arry won't give ene another up for nothink."

"Why don't 'e marry one of 'is own sort?" I says. But I see 'ow it were. Joan Mavis is a wonnerful pretty gal, jist like I were at 'er age. I fancy I can see meself in 'er now, though I 'ave improved there bein' more of me now.

"Oh! 'e says 'e can never love no one but me," says Joan, "but 'e's that hijus—and that thin—and that greedy—on'y 'e tells aunt as 'e never knowed sich a distinguished-lookin' lady like 'er, 'cept the Duchess of York, and that made 'er stick up for 'im no matter what I say."

"You come and see me to-morrow," I says, "and see if I don't drive 'im outer Little Dummle," for that's the village where Joan comes from, "on'y I shall 'ave to stay there for a little."

“ ‘Arry’s sister, Mrs. Roster, would arst you if so be you could make ‘Arry ‘appy, for she’s powerful fond of ‘Arry, what is the best young man you ever see, and that ‘andsome——”

“ You write and arst ‘er to arst me down for a week,” I says, “ but what I got in me mind will cost a couple of quid, and I ain’t got it.”

“ I got it, Gladys Alicia,” she says, “ and I’ll pay your rail fare. And Eva Roster won’t charge you nothink.”

“ But won’t she ‘ave some work for me to do, same as your aunt done? ” I arsts, for when I go for an ‘oliday, I reckon it did ought to be an ‘oliday and that folks shouldn’t come worritin’ with: “ Do you mind jist ‘elpin’ us ‘ere, Mrs. May? ” and so on, till you done as much work as you do when you ain’t got no ‘oliday; and never paid for it.

“ O’ course she won’t, for I’ll write and tell ‘er ‘ow you’re goin’ to ‘elp ‘Arry and me, and she fair ‘ates that ‘Orace Penny-quick, what told ‘er one day as when ‘e married me ‘e would raise me in the soshul scale, and ‘e didn’t mean me to ‘ave nothink more to do with them as is

common farmers. She'll do anything to upset 'im, don't you fear, Mrs. May."

A little later she brings me the two quid and I set about what I meant to do. Fust of all I called on old Lemon Salts—I dunno what 'is real name is, but they call 'im Lemon Salts, because it ain't that.

'E's a dealer in old clothes—what 'e callis 'casts off,' and is as rich as rich. But 'e's a queer old stick and goes to the picksters and likes them close ups, when the loviders kiss—and I know 'e reads love stories when 'e gets them with 'is old clothes.

So I tells 'im about Joan and 'er broke 'eart and 'e were quite interested. "Let 'em elope," 'e says, quite essisited.

"If some un would give 'em an underd pound, p'raps they could elope," says I, and looks knowin' at 'im. But 'e wouldn't bite, bein' that mean and savin' as 'e wouldn't save 'is life if it wasn't that 'e'd lose 'is money if 'e didn't.

"If I 'ad an 'undered pound I'd willin' give it 'em," says 'e with a shake of 'is old 'ead, "but 'ow I'm to pay me rent I don't know."

I did, for the old mouser owns the 'ouse what 'e lives in, and lets it to 'is brother, what pays 'im rent and lets 'im live free. And 'is brother lets it out in rooms and is makin' 'is fortin' fast. Still I never esspected old skin-flint to give nothink and so I wasn't disappointed.

"You can 'elp the loviders," I says, "and it won't cost you a penny."

"I'll do it," 'e says, "though it costs me 'ard work."

So I tells 'im 'alf my plan and 'e laughs prodigious. I never esspected 'im to take sich a fancy for it, seein' what a dry old stick 'e is but 'e likes a joke so long as it don't cost 'im nothink, and 'e did laugh. "Well, that's a good un," 'e says.

"Now," I says artful like, "what'll you pay me for a lot of old silk 'igh 'ats?"

"Nothink," 'e says quick, "for they're a drug on the market. On'y them what wouldn't wear a second 'and 'at, wears 'igh 'ats," 'e says, and I laughs to meself, for I see I got 'im all right.

"You get a lot of 'em when you buy a wardrobe?" I says.

"Yes, and it don't pay me to take 'em

away," says 'e, "I were offered sevin' yesterday, but I already got over an undred, what I can't sell no'ow, so I refused 'em," 'e says.

"I'll give you five bob for the underd you got," I says, and it quite startled 'im.

I see as 'e were sorry now as 'e'd said they was of no value. But 'e couldn't go back on it. "There's the carriage to 'ere," 'e says, "and the storage. Say a pound."

But I knowed as I'd got 'im and we argued until 'e agreed on six and fippence and a port. So we 'ad the port and I made 'im stand me one though 'e said 'e'd come out without 'is purse, on'y I said in front of the bar, as it 'ud come off the six and fippence, so as 'e couldn't get out of it and I paid and took it off when I paid 'im for the 'ats.

I got a crate for a bob and give 'im a bob for 'elpin' me to pack the 'ats in it. Then I sent it to Eva Roster. And the next day down I goes to Little Dummle.

Eva were glad to see me, for Joan 'ad writ to 'er and told 'er I were goin' to drive 'Orace Pennyquick out of the neighbour'ood. So I told 'er all about it,

and the gal did laugh. Then 'er 'usband what is a Drover, and 'is name's Dick, come in, and we told 'im, and 'e laughed till it made 'im so thirsty as 'e 'ad to go to the "Black 'Orse," and me and Eva 'ad to go there and fetch 'im out.

Then 'e brought a gallon jar 'ome, what I paid for outer the two quid, and we talked it over, and 'e agreed to 'ave a secret meeting of all the chaps as 'e knowed, what were everybody in the village and near.

There were Arthur Clove, what is ploughman, and Steve Arris what is another, and Jack Burrows what is Cowman, and Ted Large what is a Roadman, and Sid Norris what is farmer Norris' son, and a lot more.

Dick got a lot of 'em together and showed 'em what to do, and then 'e took a day off and see a lot more and 'e said they was all ready for the game, 'cause they fair 'ated 'Orace what put on sich side that 'e turned 'is back on 'em.

That arternoon Eva and me see 'Orace comin' down the street to call on Joan's aunt. I must say as 'e did look the gent,

sight so as ter make sure as 'e done ther bus'ness, and we see 'im pay over. Of course I weren't ter know then, as 'Arry 'ad told ther Booky as ther Slops 'ad set us to cop 'im out. But I found out arter as that were what 'e'd said, so as 'e'd 'ave ther putting on of ther money.

I dunno as you've ever found a cert and 'ad ter wait hours and hours for a paper. Sofey says they 'as ther news at ther clubs as soon as a race^e is won—no waiting for papers. Comes on a tape, she says, though I don't believe that. Tapes don't fly and they don't talk, so I s'pose as she 'adn't 'eard of ther loud squeakers. Why they don't put a loud squeaker in the public libraries I don't know. That would make 'em useful and then they could tell poor people what 'ad won; but ther Govingment's all ther same, lets 'clubs 'ave ther news and keeps poor people on pins and needles wondering if they was seven pound in or a pound out. But we'll 'ave a alteration now we got ther Soshi-lists in, you mark my words.

But we see ther paper boy at last and me 'eart went pitter patter so as I couldn't 'ardly breathe. And that boy!

I shall never forget, actshally stopped to speak to people and us a'most dying. I'd like to warm 'is young year for 'im.

I didn't 'ardly dare to look till I 'eard Sofey give a screech. "'Ooray," she says, "it's won."

I nearly dropped, and if it 'ad been closing time I don't believe I'd 'a' lived another minute. But when we was better, off we went to find 'Arry. When we couldn't see 'im we went to find ther booky, but Sofey said as 'e wouldn't be out now.

'Arry didn't come 'ome that day and when we went round to 'is job there was another man on the watch. "'Arry ain't turned up," 'e says, "and ther boss ain't 'alf mad about it."

"I'm going round to ther booky," I says, "so you got ter find out where 'e 'angs out," and I 'ad 'er 'at off and jumped on it jist ter show 'er what I thought of 'er 'usband. I didn't feel much better even arter that, but it did 'er good for she found out where the booky's orfice were and round we went.

I'd 'ad a presintiment and it were too true. 'E'd paid 'Arry seven quid and

'Arry 'ad told 'im 'e were going a viyage. I as near fainted as makes no matter and when I come to, there was a lot o' Sofey's 'air sticking to me fingers and 'er 'owling as I'd killed 'er. That did put me out and I 'ad ter speak pretty strick.

She says as she were bruised all over so I tells 'er as she ought to go and claim a insurance and say as she 'ad fallen down-stairs. "So I would if we'd a kep' up taking in the paper," she says; when I told 'er I'd set about 'er if she didn't speak sensible.

But that give me a idea and I don't believe as there ain't another lady what's so good at ideas as me. "I see 'ow you can pay me for what yer wicked brute of an 'usband 'as robbed me of," I says, "it means me waiting a bit longer, what I didn't ought ter do, but so long as it works out all right, I may forgive yer though I can never forget yer, yer brazen 'uzzy."

We got ther paper what gives the insurance and I read it careful. 'She 'ad to send a form to ther paper and this she done, I see ter that. Then she 'ad to give

a newsagent a order and I see ter that too. Then we 'ad ter wait a fortnit which weren't fair, but there weren't no elp.

Meanwhile we went to the Court about the summonses and she offered a bob a week but I were told I'd 'ave to pay two. 'Owsomever, as I meant to get the insur-
ance money and leave me address, I agreed.

I explained it all to 'er. "You'll 'ave to fall down stairs and break yer leg," I says, "and if it don't come off first time, you'll 'ave ter try again and again till it do."

You'd 'ardly believe the fuss she made, as though lots of people don't break their legs. Called it murder, she did, till I learned 'er somethink. I got no patient with them sort and arter 'er 'usband 'ad robbed me of seven pound one would 'a' thought as how she would 'ave been willing to break both arms and legs for me.

The idea was ter get ten pound from ther insurance, which they always pay, 'and that over ter me and go on ther dole. She were to 'ave the whole of the dole

money which were very generous of me ter allow that much, considering all what 'ad 'appened.

'Ow we got through the next two weeks I 'ardly know and then come ther time. 'Arry 'adn't come 'ome so there weren't that worrit, and I showed 'er jist where she'd fall. "But I might break me neck," she 'owled. Oh! but she did get on me nerves.

"Well," I says, "if you do, you'll never know it, so what's the fuss."

But when I took 'er to the landing she clung to the banisters wicked, and says she'd rather die than be killed. She's one of them sort what don't see fairness and reason. I tried ter push 'er, and then, the mean coward 'ooked on ter me so that I'd 'a' falled too.

I give 'er what for till I were afeard as she 'ave ther whole neighborood up and so I pretended to give way.

"Look 'ere, Sofey," I says, "you ain't no pal, but on'y an ipocrit. I'd 'a' done as much for you."

"I'm afeared," she sniffs 'orrid. I could 'a' shook 'er, but I on'y scrooged 'er arm a bit more.

“ Stop that row,” I says, “ and *I’ll* fall down the stairs.”

You should ‘a’ seen ‘er grin. She didn’t mind ‘ow much I ‘urt meself: “ Now that’s reel kind,” she says.

“ I don’t like the job,” I says, “ and I’m a bundle o’ nerves, so as I mightn’t fall hard enough, I want you to give me a good push down.”

“ I’ll do it,” says the callous brute, as ‘earty as she could. She reg’lar loved it, I could see.

“ Now,” I says standing jist at ther top stair. “ You got ter run from ther end of ther landing and push me as ‘ard as you can.”

“ Trust me, Gladys,” she says as bright as nothink, and back she goes. “ Now,” I says and off she runs with ‘er arms stretched out.

I were looking out sharp, and jist as the wicked ‘uzzy touched me with ther tips of ‘er cruel fingers I caught ‘old of the banisters an’ twisted outer the way.

Smash she went past me with a rush, and down she went. “ Ow! me leg,” she sung out from the bottom of ther stairs and then she fainted.

But it were all right—she 'ad broke 'er leg, so that's what comes o' wishing other people to be 'urt—but I never said nothink about it to ther doctor.

MOTORING

When I gô a-motoring, I do it, Ducks, in
style
And ther motor as I rides in cost all eight
'undred pound,
And it costs a pretty penny for petrol and
for ile
And me Shovver is in uniform what takes
me round.
I'm as grand as any Duckess when I takes
the hair
And I rides to Epping Forest when I've
time to spare.

* * *

When I'm in me luvly motor I can jist
look down
On two seaters what go sneaking along
and away,
And mine's ready any minit when I'd go
from town
And ride out for me pleasure for the day,
I won't go in them low doors what some
women is now forced in,
For them Fords and other cheap machines
is nothing but ex'austin'.

And though I've got me motor I ain't
no ways conceited
I pass ther time of day to pals what walks
along ther road
But I feels as I'm in glory when they see
me nicely seated
With me 'elmet 'at and stockings aller
mode,
And me garage costs me nix and me clean-
ing is done free
For me servants is the people as they call
ther G-O-C.

CHARITY

I WONDER them p'lice is allowed, for they're a danger to the public, don't you think so, Mr. lee Briton. What else is they numbered for? Why as me lady friend Mrs. 'Iggins says, if a few ladies want to talk in the street a Slop comes up and wants to 'ave 'is say.

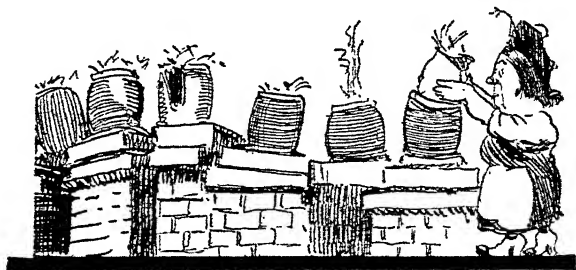
Mrs. 'Iggins is a sweet lady what 'as come to board with me, 'aving got a superation order from 'er 'usband and a quid a week. I got a lovely flat, and you did oughter see me roof garden, Mr. lee Briton. Srubs in all ther chimley pots and nashturnums climbing up ther walls. I got a picture—'Ere it is. Ain't it like a Park, Mr. lee Briton?

'E 'adn't paid 'er for seventeen weeks, when I met 'er fust, which were in court, and then I a'vised 'er not to get no more orders, what is useless, but to come along of me to where 'e worked, what she done.

'E paid up one pound three on the spot,

and two quid on the Friday, and Popsy—what were 'er pet name—said I were unvaluable, and that's 'ow she come to board with me, me 'aving such influence with gents.

Mind you, I pitied the chap. 'E said she nagged and give 'im no rest, so as it drove 'im to drink, and 'e weren't quite 'isself when 'e started on 'er sufficient for to get the supperation.



"AIN'T IT LIKE A PARK."

I b'lieve she'd 'a' nagged me, on'y, as soon as she started, I started fust, and so she give in, and were reely a dear, 'and-ing over all 'er money and arsting me to spend it for 'er, what I've done ever since.

It seems as she were one of the ladies what sells flags in the streets for charities, and she'd got the loverly white dress

what she'd wore, at least she'd got the ticket for it.

It cost over four bob to get it out, but I saw as we could get the money back and more. I knowed a young lady what made paper flowers a treat. I told Popsy they was more like flowers than what she'd buy at a flourists, and she 'ad to agree, what pleased Marie wonderful.

I told Marie as I wanted some flowers to put on me 'usband's grave, on'y I couldn't afford much and she give me a job lot 'o white lillies for a bob what 'ad been throwed back on 'er 'ands cause the fashion 'ad changed.

So Popsy and me we dressed up loverly and got trays and made out as we was collecting for the 'Ackney Cottage 'Orspital.

If a gent passed Popsy, I stopped 'im and said loud: "Oh! 'ow can you be so mean, ain't you got even two D in the world."

Gents don't like to be called mean and it riles 'em worse if you make out as they're stoney, and so we done well till a slop comes up and arsts where the 'orspital were and what were our authority.

I said we'd go and fetch the Secretarv.

and off we went. That were in Dalston Lane and we went right up to Stoke Newington and started fresh there, for to tell the exact, there weren't no 'Ackney Cottage 'Orspital as I knowed of, consequently there weren't no Secretary.

But them Slops chivied us from place to place, until at last we'd 'ad to go 'ome, but we'd got near four quid. We 'ad a try again nex' day and then I'm blest if a Inspector didn't tell us 'ed run us in if 'e caught us at it again. And they call this a free country, what it never will be while them p'lice is allowed to talk to ladies as they do.

"Well," I says to Popsy, "we got to find some charity what is to be found if wanted, and then we'll get up a Bazaar."

"That would be nice," she says, "'ow about The Lost 'Ome for Cats."

"No," I says firm, "I've 'ad enough o' cats, and 'orspitals do arst you sich questions, but there's a Football Club what young Nosey Bill belongs to, as is in want o' funds."

"'Ow do you manage with them. Do they give you a perstentage," she arsts. She's a very ignorant woman reely.

"No," I says, "and you don't want no perstentage, you charge yer exes, and it's a boy's club so they won't 'ave the cheek to arst questions."

I see young Nosey Bill, and 'e cottoned on to the idea directly.

"Get us enough to buy us new shirts," says 'e, "and we'll give you a vote of thanks."

It seems as they wanted shirts all of one pattern because they 'ad so many diff'rent colours as some of 'em was often mistook for the other side.

They 'ad a commital meeting, all reg'lar and proper, and it was agreed to 'ire Rainbow 'All for two nights, what is over a fried fish shop and not often let on account of the aroamer.

Then they 'ad to go round 'Ackney and call at all the 'ouses and arst for somethink towards the Bazaar, and everyone as give somethink, 'ad a ticket of permission give 'em, so as they didn't 'ave nothink to pay to go in, other people 'ad to pay thripence and cheap too.

Some low people called it a Jumble Sale, but I said it were a Charity Bazaar, for the benefit of poor boys as wanted to play

football and win the nex' war on the playing field.

We got sich a clection o' things as my flat were a'most crowded out. There was thirty seven pairs o' boots and eleven odd ones, and severial 'adn't a nole in them.

There was nineteen pairs o' trowsis, and when their whiskers was trimmed, some of 'em looked good enough to work in on foggy days.

Shirts we had dozens of, and collars by the score, forty two jumpers, one good enough for me to wear, what I did, and a number of blouses and skirts.

Then we 'ad plates, some 'ardly cracked, cups and sarcers, a pie dish and two tumblers, severial beer bottles, what were worth good money, so we put them away, a steel chain, a dog's collar, two cheers what could easy be repaired, a poker what a gent 'ad give when is wife were out, a quantity o' books, an auncie macassar and so on.

I made Em Bush give a bob and let 'er 'ave a stall, and give other ladies of me acquaintance what give somethink down, as security, I give stalls to, and we

opened in fine stile, Nosey Bill 'aving got the Kirton Court Concertina Band to play for us. There was three of 'em, two of 'em jist jined, and they played The Red Flag so like Rule Britannica as some thought it was one thing and some another, so as it near come to a fight. 'Owever I soon stopped that.

But the way they turned over the things was awful. We 'adn't marked no prices, and I 'ad to see as none of the ladies sold too cheap, and then I found as two of 'em 'ad put the best where they couldn't be seen, meaning to sneak off with 'em.

We took five and two at the door and I were the Treasure and put the money in me pocket, and when the man from the fried fish shop come to turn out the lights I made all the ladies what 'ad stalls, show me as they 'adn't got no more on 'em.

One said as 'ow one and seven were 'er own money, but I made 'er fork out, and another lady 'ad ninepence in a corner of 'er 'ankerchief, but that didn't take me in, and I took near five pound 'ome, though young Nosey Bill said as 'im and 'is commital 'ud take care of it.

"Just as if I'd trust a lot o' boys with t," I says, and I 'ad to clout 'is young year afore I got rid of 'im.

I didn't want the ladies the next night, so I didn't care when they said they wouldn't come. Nex' night were auction night and on'y a penny entrance.

There were one stall, 'owsomever, and I 'ung a cardboard up: "Kisses tuppence each."

I'd 'alf a mind to 'ave it sixpence, on'y Popsy thought there'd be more if we on'y charged tuppence.

And then, I can' ardlly believe 'er cheek even now, she 'ad the sauce to say as she were a-going to keep that stall, and were quite 'uffy when I said as no one 'ud want to kiss 'er pasty face and I were going to keep it meself.

"Well then," she says, in 'er nasty dicktorial way, "you'd better get a good-looking young gal," she says.

"That's already arranged for," says I, "seeing as I'm the identical lady."

"I don't call six and forty young," she says and that were too much for me.

I 'ad to pour a jugful o' water over 'er afore she come to 'er silly senses, but she

apologised, and I didn't let go of 'er 'air till she did.

What I say is if people 'aven't got no manners you got to learn 'em manners, besides, look at the lies she told.

My trouble were 'ow were I to auction the things and be in the kissing stall at the same time, but I'm that clever as I always manage it. I arranged for the concertina band to play as soon as I give the word and then I'd give up the auction for a little.

We 'ad to let a lot of gents in free, though Popsy were for making 'em pay, but says I, if we don't 'ave gents 'ow's the kissing stall to pay. I know she'd 'a' liked to say she didn't care, so I jist put me fingers through 'me 'air, careless like and looked at 'er and she didn't say it.

I must say the boys worked 'ard getting gents in. I believe some of 'em thought as there was free drinks, any'ow I counted up to twenty and me little 'eart went pitter pat so as I could 'ardly auction nothink.

Some of the trowsis went for a penny each. and some of the iumpers on'v

fetcht tuppence, but it were no use keeping 'em, so I let 'em go.

"Now," I says, going to the kissing stall, "you all know as the Duchess o' Gainsborough kissed every gent as voted for the Dook o' Wellington—now I'm a going to kiss ev'ry gent as gives tuppence to the Charity fund."

You could 'a' 'eard a pin drop, and then the gents got j'alous o' one another and the 'ole lot were a going out of the 'all when I stood in the doorway.

"Now," I says, "ave the kiss afore you go or you don't go."

One gent come forward. I'd knowed 'im for donkey's years. "'Ere's tuppence," 'e says 'anding over, "and any-one can 'ave the kiss."

Now any lady but me would 'a' took offence, but I took the tuppence and I called young Nosey Bill and whispered to 'im. Then 'im and 'is commital got ankchers and blindfolded a gent and pushed 'im forward and I kissed 'im, and they all cheered tremenjous.

Arter that the gent 'elped the boys and I kissed seventeen gents and some of 'em squealed like gals and two swore most

ungentlemanly. Then I told the boys to collect the tuppences as I'd done me duty like a neroine, and I went back and sold the last two pairs o' boots for three 'apence.

I were jist going 'ome to count the money, when up come the Fish man and arst me to pay a quid for the 'All. Like 'is sauce.

"Not me," I says, "it's for the club to pay," and off I goes.

Then if you'll believe me, young Nosey Bill and the commital come round to me flat and arst me for the money. I can't think what boys is coming to now-a-days.

"Look 'ere you young scum," I says strick, "the expenses come to fifteen and four pence more than we've took—so pay up."

"'Ow's that?" says one of the Commital, and it wasn't till I got the broom to 'em, that they went away.

I give Nosey two bob for 'isself next day on condition as he explained to 'is commital 'as expenses always do come to more'n you take in a Bazaar, and as 'e were the biggest and 'is Ma 'ad learnt 'im 'ow to fight. I didn't 'ear no more.

Certingly the Fish man worrited me for the 'ire of the 'all, but 'e got tired of it. Popsy were a noosance, too; at first, arsting me to give 'er 'alf, but arter she'd been two days abed she give in.

I reckon as Bazaars is the best form o' Charity; eleven pound fifteen and seven pence and fourteen French pennies were what I got outer mine.

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY

CHRISMUS is all right for them 'as 'ave ther ready. I ain't sayin' a word against Chrismus, on'y if there ain't nothink, to be jolly with, I arst you 'ow can you be jolly? You know as you give me five bob last Chrismus but one Mr. lee Briton, and that's 'ow I bought me Sunday 'at at a sale. There was a lot o' common people there what grudged me even that, but I managed to get it, me being a lady what ain't going to be sat upon.

Mind you, I can laugh as well as most folks—for if I see a woman slip down inter a puddle or a gent in a white west-cote run against a chimley sweep, I can laugh as well as anyone. But 'ow can a lady laugh when she 'as visitors in 'er flat and on'y 'alf a loaf and some marg in ther place, and it's four days from Chrismus?

I'll tell you, I gotter a cousin Lena what married a gent of the name of 'Obbles. 'E made out 'e were frightful rich on'y 'e 'ad to wait till some 'un died. That were ten years ago, and ever since then Lena 'as 'ad to keep 'im cause if 'e worked 'is uncle wouldn't leave 'im nothin' for disgracin' the family. So 'e said.



" I BOUGHT ME SUNDAY 'AT AT A SALE."

They 'ad two kids, both gals, and Lena said they was the image of me, but I put up with that 'cause she were so 'ard up. On ther Friday before Chrismus when I went 'ome there were Lena and 'er kids outside me door waitin' for me.

" Oh, Gladys, dear," she says to me, " Cuthbert's gone to see 'is Uncle for Chrismus 'cause we ain't got nowheres to live, and 'e said I'd better arst you to take us in till arter Chrismus."

Me 'eart were in me boots and there's 'oles in them—the woman what I said I'd erblige 'ad gone away for Chrismus, and 'ad give me ten bob to last me ten days and I'd spent six. But there was Lena with ther tears a down 'er silly face, and ther two poor kids what I couldn't turn out.

"Come in," I says, "but I ain't got no uncle to leave me nothink—for why," I says, "I've left most of me things with 'im."

She come in and I give ther kids two sticks o' firewood and some rags to make dolls with, while I thinks what I were ter do.

"Well," I says, "you come at ther right time fer feaſtin'. We'll 'ave bread sauce without a turkey—and bread pud-den without milk, and that'll be our Chrismus dinner—but it won't be no different to what I 'ave every day when I'm at 'ome."

I thought as I'd go ter see Mr. 'Arris, ther butcher, and see if 'e'd give me tick fer a jint.

But when I got there 'e were servin' 'undreds of people and when I did get in

a word 'e reg'lar snapped me up. "This ain't no Drage's," 'e said, as nasty as nasty; "if you want yer jint on ther instalment cistern you've come to ther wrong shop."

Some low women begun ter laugh at that, but I took up a jint from among ther block ornaments and slapped it in one woman's mouth, and then I throwed the rest at 'im.

On me way 'ome I stopp'd to look in at the library, to see if any woman wanted a lady 'elp for Chrismus in the advertisements. But I ~~didn't~~ see none, but I did see a gent 'ad found a purse and 'ooever could prescribe ther contents satisfactory would 'ave it.

That give me a idea—me bein' always knowed as a lady what is ideal. Off I went 'ome quick. "'Ere Lena," I says, "you got ter do somethink fer yer livin'.

"Pay attention, since it's about ther on'y think 'as you can pay. I've lost a purse, but I don't remember 'ow much I 'ad in it, and a gent 'as found it, and won't give it up till I tell 'im."

"What a cruel brute," she says.

"Well, as 'e's a man, what can you

expect ? ” says I, “ so you go and see ’im and say you lost a purse.”

“ So I did,” she says, “ the very day afore I were married, and Cuth went on awful about it.”

“ Never mind ’im,” I says, “ you come with me and when you see ther gent say as there were three pound twelve and fi-pence in your purse.”

“ There were on’y two and four-pence,” she says. Ain’t it aggravatin’ when a woman will talk about what she don’t understand. “ You do what I say,” says I, “ and when ther gent says you’re wrong you arst ter see the purse so as ter believe ’im and see exactly what is in it.”

She arst me why—and I ’ad ter shake ’er to make ’er see sense and then off we went. Ther gent were on’y livin’ in Dalston Lane and I sent ’er in, keepin’ outer sight.

About ten minutes arter back she come.

“ There’s thirty shillings and some coppers in the purse,” she says, “ and it’s a red morrocky—was yours a morrocky purse, Gladys ? ” she arsts.

“ Find out,” I says sharp, for I do ’ate

silly questions, and then off I goes to ther gent.

'E were a jolly old bird, and,*thinks I, I can manage you easy. "I've come fer me purse," I says, "what I lost."

"What were it like?" 'e arsts, and I says: "A red morrocky."

"Were this it?" 'e says, and 'olds up the red morrocky what 'e must 'a' showed Lena. So I says: "Yes."

"What were there inside?" 'e asks, and I says thirty shillings and some coppers.

Then 'e looks at me real ugly. "Do you take me for a fool?" 'e says, and immediate I shsuspected 'im for a fraud. "I know the ways of your sort," 'e says; "I've no doubt as you sent a confederate to find out all about the purse so as you could prescribe it to me, but I'm not 'avin' any. The purse what I found wasn't the purse what I showed to a woman just now, and now I'm goin' to 'phone fer the police and give yer in charge fer conspiracy."

There were a nice thing! Lena must 'a' been a fool to be took in like that.

"That's deformation o' character,"

I tells 'im, "and I'm goin' in for damages."

Then in come a old lady as says. "Whatever is the matter, George?" and we both tells 'er—and then she tells 'im it were very wrong to tell a story about the purse. "You told a lie, George," she says, "'cause the purse weren't the one you found. I believe what this lady says, so go away, and never let me see you a doin' tricks again."

She said it were a dreadful thing for me to lose me purse just at Chrismus time, and I told 'er I shouldn't 'a' minded for meself, but when Lena and 'er two kids come unexpected it were very worritin'.

Blest if she didn't think as I must 'a' invited them, for she said I were a very kind woman and she took my address and said as 'ow if she wanted an 'elp she'd send for me.

She give me five bob when I went away, and said she sympathosed with Lena.

Five bob were better than forty days, and so I went 'ome with some fried fish and taters for the kids and Lena, and didn't they enjoy them.

But that weren't all. It were Chrismus

Eve and we were a goin' to 'ave a cold dinner on Chrismus Day, and I'd got six pennorth of brawn, when there was a knock at me door, and in come the very old lady what I 'ad seed.

"Oh!" she says, and starts cryin', "where's yer fire?"

I showed 'er ther coal cellar what I kep' under the bed.

"I oughter thought o' coals," she says, and a man lugged in an 'amper.

"I'll get some in," she says, "while you unpack the 'amper."

There was bacon and heggs and a fowl, and puddens what made the kids dance, and at the bottom were a purse with thirty bob and some coppers in it. "Ain't she a angel," says Lena.

"No," I says, sharp, for I do 'ate fools, "what angel ever give bacon and a fowl and a purse with money: Tell me that, you fool," I says, "and don't make me cry for your ignorance again."

It were ever so late, but the old lady come back at last in a taxi, and she brought three scuttles o' coals from 'er own cellar.

So we 'ad a lovely Chrismus dinner

arter all, all through me being such a lady,
but it ain't too late ter give me me Chris-
mus box now you've come back, Mr. lee
Briton.

And I parted and we parted——

THE END

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